

SALE OF POISONS

PROPOSED CHANGES IN LAW

HOME OFFICE NOTICE

Mr. H. N. Linstead, secretary and registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, outlined yesterday the changes that will take place in the law governing the sale of poisons as a result of the notice issued to-day by the Home Office.

The notice states that the Home Secretary proposes, after the expiration of 40 days from to-day, to make certain Rules in relation to the Pharmacy and Poisons Act, 1933. It is intended that the Rules shall come into force on May 1, 1936; as from that date the various existing statutory provisions and regulations relating to the sale, supply, storage, and transport of poisons will be repealed. Notice is also given that the Home Secretary proposes to confirm the Poisons List, being the list of the substances which are to be treated as poisons for the purposes of the Act, prepared and submitted to him by the Poisons Board for his approval.

Mr. Linstead said that the old system, whereby the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society had to decide what were and what were not poisons and what rules should be made for the selling of poisonous substances, would be supplanted by the machinery of the Poisons Board and the Home Secretary. There would also be a new system of inspection, under which the chemist's shop would be inspected by pharmacist inspectors appointed by the Pharmaceutical Society, and the shops of unqualified sellers of poisons by the inspectors of local authorities.

The sale of strychnine, which was used at the present time by gamekeepers and others for the destruction of crows and foxes, and rat poisons would be illegal if the Board's recommendations were adopted that they should be sold only as ingredients of medicines. Arsenical weed killers would also be sold only by chemists. One of the objects of that provision was to encourage the use of non-arsenical weed killers. The Board had also recommended that spirit of salt should in future be sold only by chemists, in order to encourage the use of equally effective but non-toxic preparations in the house.

SALE OF LYSOL

The Home Secretary would have to decide whether he would accept the recommendation of the majority of the Board that lysol should be sold only by chemists, or whether he would accept the view of the minority of the Board that, provided it was in proper bottles, properly labelled, it could be sold by any trader.

With regard to the Rules, Mr. Linstead said they were broadly a notification of existing legislation, but extending its provisions over a wider field and in greater detail. Special Rules were proposed for the supply and storage of poisons in hospitals, in which, the Board reported, serious accidents had from time to time occurred through laxity of supervision and insufficient care. Qualifications were prescribed for those who were to supervise the manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations containing poisons, and a special bottle, with which it was hoped the public would become familiar and which they would automatically connect with poisons, was prescribed for all liquid poisons.

The new Rules closed the gap in the present legislation which permitted anyone to purchase a poison through a wholesaler by sending an order in the name of a fictitious retailer. In future, the buyer of any of the more potent poisons must be known to the seller, even when purchasing from the trade, and if he was not known to the seller the buyer must send a certificate from a householder whom the seller knew. If the seller did not know the householder, the latter's certificate must be endorsed by the police. A new provision proposed to restrict the supply to the public of certain poisons to a medical prescription.

The Board pointed out, Mr. Linstead added, that there was a limit to the protection which could be afforded by statute, and that nothing the authorities could do could prevent the accidents which occurred from time to time through the negligence of individuals. The point of greatest danger to the public was in their homes, where the only protection from the risk of accidents with poisons was the exercise of intelligence by the individual citizen.

Sale Of Poisons.

The Times (London, England), Wednesday, Jun 19, 1935; pg. 11; Issue 47094. (704 words)

Category: News

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS185543891